

The Cousin of Shakespeare

“The Cousin of Shakespeare”

by

Nathaniel Torres

(Version 8)

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## The Cousin of Shakespeare

### **Introduction:**

There has been many theories put forth by educated men that William Shakespeare, for the sole purpose of making a few bucks, was the front-man for an anonymous author who was the true talent behind his famous works. Perhaps there existed some slightly more educated but highly-talented drunken wretch who was always in debt, or in opposing fashion a more highly educated aristocrat who didn't want anyone to know his true identity, but still wanted to express his creativity and used William as his go-between. Both intelligent and un-intelligent literary attempts have been invented. Some attempts bear the seal of authentic research, others the stink of pure idealistic fantasy, and yet others drool with the foul scent of putrid, romantic vomit. The collection you now hold in your hands offers up the truth, that there were numerous authors, in fact more authors than anyone previously imagined, and that those true authors belonged to the streets and taverns and the ugly whore-dens of England, and were unknowingly, indirect contributors to many of William's most excellent plays and sonnets.

Shakespeare hired many men (and perhaps women as well) who went about town and wrote down any interesting lines of dialogue they heard which William would later incorporate the best of into his dramatic works. No one ever noticed any of this had been going on because it was all done in delicate secret. He called his team of idea-collectors his Word-Foragers. The Foragers were merely already contracted actors working double-jobs. If they were dumb enough to blow the whole scam wide open, they would never work again, so the threat of losing their livelihood kept them, for the most part, in check. There would be however one that strayed from the normal routine. The sayings the foragers jotted down and perhaps sometimes embellished upon with their own drunken wit could have been the work of two conspiring word-spies who had labored simultaneously in the same location(s) at any given time. Their individual names are about as identifiable as any existing list of actors that once worked under William's employ. Through them he had ears everywhere. The subtle beauty of William's stage-play enterprise is that few of the original drunken word-crafters would remember ever having spoken many of the words they had uttered having been totally wasted at the time. When attending any given performance of Shakespeare's plays (if they ever bothered to attend a theater at all) their very own witticisms may have been entirely foreign to their sober ears, or perhaps they did sound vaguely familiar, but in the end they believed no one could possibly know exactly what they had said to themselves in their deepest, darkest hearts when they were alone, or out loud in a pub when among their drunken companions, all of them mulling over their wretched lives. This is why I believe William's plays struck a resonance with the common folk. He was merely stealing their lines and selling their words back to them, the opportunistic scoundrel. Regarding the actors who jotted down the words of the wise and unwise, both great and small, in the many varied locations across the nation of England, one thing is indeed certain, they delivered their ale-smeared notes to a gentleman called, "The Cousin of Shakespeare," who in turn would deliver them to William, who after deciding what words he wanted to keep and/or throw away would burn the original evidence in his fireplace, so that the final versions would exist only in his own handwriting. The following pages contain a collection of sayings the Cousin had not delivered to William, but instead kept for himself, with the intention of becoming the basis of original materials for a stage-play he himself had intended to write. After all, why should William alone have all the fun and fame and riches? Unfortunately, the person who called himself the Cousin died before he could actually begin writing his play. These favorite collected lines were lost for many years, only having recently been found in the secret compartment of an antique writing desk purchased in London, sent to the United States, and dumped on a New City Street on a cold winter day

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

of street recycling. The homeless persons having been torn apart the desk for the sole purpose of using it as firewood to throw into a barrel so they might keep themselves warm on cold days, had enough presence of mind not to also throw the book they had discovered into the flames. If they had, this work would have been lost forever; not unlike the account of how the novel *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo was almost lost at sea during a storm. Eventually either forgotten, or purposefully thrown away, or lost perhaps during a drunken, hobo fist-fight (there was blood on the ground nearby where the pages were found) the manuscript was picked up and taken home by a unlearned, passing stranger, who in turn sold it to me for a five measly bucks. The manuscript, which I understood to be genuine, historically mind-boggling, and affordable by only the richest billionaires in existence, was greatly damaged, and it took a long time to decipher many of its water-smudged literary contents. Due to numerous missing ideas, words, and my inability to unscramble certain hand-written sentences, many sayings here were re-interpreted, re-written, or re-invented, and have yet again been slightly re-vised by myself for clarity's sake. Most of this is, of course, complete and utter absolute bullshit. So don't you believe a word of it.

The Author

(Special thanks to Twitter)

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

### **The Sayings:**

I did not arrest him because he is going to do something so monumentally stupid it will get him killed. Trust me, it's better this way. No trial, no hangman, no funeral, no burial, no expensive tombstone.

My King, the barbarians are attacking. But they are drunk and merely humping on the castle walls. We do not fancy dropping boiling oil on them at this rather embarrassing moment for all of us when cold water will suffice.

You do not take me for a religious man? I am quite religious. I believe that the great power of doing nothing will get me killed.

It is far more dangerous to lie than to speak truth. More liars are at the bottom of that river than church-goers.

No wonder I have no followers nor admirers. I fart when spoken to and am silent when I should scream bloody murder.

I am an artist, sir! I may paint in blood but that makes me no less an artist than your average killer.

I do not doubt you see I am drunk. It is however a wonder to me you can see at all, what with that wide-brimmed hat.

There is a rumor that you are this country's best lover. Either a lover of women or of strong wine and vomiting in back alleys.

Double trouble, froth and bubbles, snails and entrails, rats guts and squirrels nuts, spiders webs and babies' heads.

Look into my eyes, is there anger or happiness in them? Pardon me, sir, I did not know that you were blind.

Yes. Sing songs of love, write poems of sadness, drink wine in your youth. But knowing my wife will be your early grave.

He asked for bad news first. He did not get to hear the good news. I killed him. It is sad that some men do not like to hear good news.

The play? It is almost finished, but its fate is directly linked to its author's. That would be me. You will never know how it ends if you kill me, for I have some bad news to tell you.

I learned he was hiring a room directly under my bed. And when I found him living inside my wife that's when I killed him.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I traded the pain in my heart for extreme pain in my bones. Do not ask how this happened. I just know it did.

Bereft of common sense, lacking in humor, a depressing fellow to be around, pretended to be a friend of all mankind but was in reality a complete donkey, yet we drank with him anyway. He was after all the one paying for the drinks.

Learn your lines, like an actor would. So that in marriage bed or divorce court you will always know what to say.

I thought my husband was a stupid man when he traded our horse for a sick pig. We now have our own worm farm.

Down a well I fell. Then the dream worsened. I was in my wife's bed and she wanted my affections. I awoke screaming.

Inform me as to your financees. No, I do not mean finances. I speak instead of the ladies who pay you rent, that is your financees.

If I had known you were leprous I would not have kissed you. I would have, yes, had I one year left to live and no riches whatsoever.

I thought she was for me. She was not. She was for someone else who is now dead. I have killed the wrong person.

Oh, wounded heart sparrow. Green fields burnt with fire to the blackest of black. My dark wings are mournful ashes. Burp.

I will go with you to church. But our paths divide there. You to inside. I to leap off the cliff behind the rectory.

Would you believe I just saw a ghost? A mist above a fire? Torchlight through smoke? Would you believe I am drunk?

She has not spoken to me since I ordered her not to. What woman actually listens? Something ugly is going to happen.

The gold was recovered but lost again being transported across a river. Divert the river and buy some shovels.

I moved closer to spy through the window. Another had the same idea. The town pervert and I came to hurtful blows.

There was something familiar about the voice so I acted impulsively. It is sad the now dead man was

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

not truly him.

There is no such thing as love. I looked everywhere for it. All women did was hate me until I bled. I simply must stop raping them.

How is the newly-built house so soon haunted? Did you unknowingly build it on ancient graves? Go dig and find out.

Laugh not that you think my face is funny. I was born with a clown's face. On my saddest days children die happily.

I speak the eternal language. Its only words are the sounds of moaning and groaning. A tongue all men understand.

Give this sword to the priest. Tell him Saint Peter once wielded it. Tell him it is for the cutting off of ears.

When over the wall hide behind the bushes. The two men in question will meet there. If they make love do not giggle.

Give the letter and the gold coins to the miserable old one-legged rat-catcher. Tell him he needs to catch his own tail.

When you see the carriage show yourself and raise the torch. When you see their crossbows, run. They will give chase.

Go to the jail. Give them this payment. Tell them not who bailed out the prisoner in question. My reputation is at stake.

He is insane. His madness never ends. Pass me the salt and pepper. Where does he reside so I may slay him?

He has written a masterpiece. The problem is that he will rewrite it into oblivion. So I must copy it, and steal it, in order to save it. And don't worry, he is too stupid to recognize his early draft, since he is only in love with his latest scribblings.

Light! Light! Open the curtains! No! I am blind! Blind! Close the curtains! Where is my piss-pot? I need a drink to face this day!

Yes, I am irresponsible but also a consummate professional. I am drunk when onstage and off. I am therefore always in character.

No, no, no. I do not do comedy. I am a dramatic actor. When last I did a comedy I was booed into dark oblivion.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

The actress is rough around the edges. We must hide her past as best we can by never showing her nude. Men might recognize her rear end.

My play? It is about life at its worst, humor at its best, and love at its greatest. That is boring beyond repair.

I met a traveling man. Short fellow with a funny face. Great sense of humor. Stole my purse as I was laughing.

You must be strong and have great courage. Now go back in there and fight like a man. I bet a lot of money on you.

She says I make her happy. How on earth can that be when she does not make me happy?

He is hilarious. He tells jokes like a clown. He belongs in a circus. Let us paint his face in dead colors. Unfortunate that he does not think this is funny.

I came as soon as I learned of ... oh, I see ... they are here. Well, unexpected gentlemen, if you kill me we cannot unite as allies of a common enemy!

Such animosity. Such froth. Such hostility. What anger. You are a man made of many rusty knives. You are hired.

In some countries they pull out a man's fingernails for saying such things. I will settle for your teeth.

She has learned to smile again. I am not the cause of her new-found joy. When you find out who he is kill him.

I do not admire warriors. I admire swords, shields and helmets, yes, but not warriors themselves. Their intent is too often my death.

Educated men? It is they who are so sure they will win wars, that they start wars! Speak not to me of smart men! My true friends are the idiots of the earth!

Tell me, were you born an idiot or did you go to school for it?

No no no, if I wanted to remain a miserable, tormented, horse's arse I would not have murdered my second wife!

It is a secret. A secret must never be told. Never repeated. Must remain a secret. Do not tell anyone I told you.

I saved his life once, I did. Or so he thinks. He was no longer drunk, you see. I needed favors. So I lied and said I had saved him from great danger.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

My wife is returning home. My mistress is coming to visit and wants to meet her. I shall prepare a noose.

Twice I warned him to flee. You are to go and find him, and tear that fool's arms off, maybe then he will know what his legs are good for.

She dances like an angel, but makes love like a dumb cow. Rid me of this unimaginative woman, Hernatio. She does murder my romantic spirit. She would put-me-off to kissing on moonlit nights.

He is doing well today. Tomorrow? In the gutter he will be, begging for coins, licking his own two filthy feet.

Fifty men were sent to kill him, and he defeated them all. How? He sent his wife to meet them!

Life always changes. Never a day goes by where things do not change. So why am I always so bored?

The young these days they are smarter than we were, but not wiser. Yes, money falls into their laps but they eat it.

What does it take to get them to listen? Must I shout? Shall I threaten? There's only one way, which is to openly and unashamedly take a dump!

Did I not tell you it would be a woman that kills me? Well, I was wrong. I have just learned it will be several.

I told him his enemy wanted his riches, but his wife still desires him. Soon there shall be a slaughter.

Two big men on either side of me, ready to club each-other to death! Only I stood between them and the here-after.

If I speak both nations would go to war. But I must be silent. Would that they cease troubling me and trouble each-other.

This trouble will pass. Act like nothing is your fault. It really is not your fault. Someone else is always to blame. Even if you are guilty.

I nearly got into great trouble but I escaped the net by passing the blame to the fellow that had not started the whole mess.

Your story is a horrible lie. It tastes bad, smells foul, and its consequences reek of impending unnatural disaster.

When in trouble try to avoid getting into more trouble. People tend to solve problems with even bigger problems.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

So it has been since soon after we were married, I fell in love with another. Do not hate me if I am so lovable.

You are losing your soul, sir. I warn you. Save your mind or you will lose it, and you may never ever find it again.

I want you to kill my husband, if he is not already dead, killed by one of his many mistresses or filthy whores.

Ever had one of those days when nothing makes sense? Faces are evil? Laughter is insanity? Children are demons?

His soul is lost. His whole life goes up in smoke. Gone off to the opium dens, throwing his final days to the winds of forgetfulness.

It is snowing. Let us build a man of snow and place a hat on his head. When passersby come to see, we will rob them!

I looked into the eyes of that demon. Red and watery. He had been weeping. Crying for all the souls lost to heaven.

You called me evil, yet, you insulted me anyway. What made you think I was not evil enough to put you to death?

I know she is married. But she crawled under the table, and, I started writing a novel but invented the short story.

Once I loved her. Now I watch for her out of the corner my eye, wondering when that witch will appear. I am haunted.

She stole my mammon. She only loved me for my mammon. Mammon is all she ever loves. Man oh mammon.

There are places, magical places, where you can be anything you want. But, you have to read books to go there. It is a difficult bridge to cross. And once crossed you might never come back.

“Tell me again, I want to get this right, she said she would rather kiss a cow than I? Do you like being alive? Have you ever heard the saying, It is the poor messenger who incurs the king's wrath?”

“Please tell me O king, how a man may wisely give another man bad news?”

“You would play smart with me too? As if this will save you?”

“No, my King, there is one standing just behind you who is holding a knife to your neck.”

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I did not know that you and she were lovers, I mean, rather that you believe she is in love with you. Wait, let me rephrase that.

Time to eat. I am starving. Feed me or I will kill you.

Listen to me carefully, your wife, I just saw her, kissing, uh-hm, another woman. Why do you hit me?! Hit the other woman!

We were attacked by pirates, senseless, loathsome, drunken fiends, black as night. They threatened to kill everyone! I escaped but many were left behind. My wife too! She alone will be their undoing!

Where is this thing called love? I looked high and low for it. I swam great seas and leveled tall mountains. I dug mines but I found none of its golden veins.

She has not contacted me since we last argued. This has made me a happy man. But I am sad she has not contacted me.

I saw him by the fountain, looking so used and filthy that I could not hurt him when I saw him stealing the coins that are the sad wishes of the poor.

I do not doubt that you are a good killer. But being a killer and a liar, do not tell me you are a great master of deep truth.

It was my pride that made me do evil. It was money that made me betray my friends. Love it was that made me hate.

I do not know where she is. She is gone like a leaf in the wind and will only return if I had all the money in the world.

“Sit down my son. I have a story to tell you. I will not pretend this time. It is about your origins. Something you did not know. Until now. I am not your father. You were left on my doorstep. I remember that night. Cold and rainy. Thunder, rain, and lightning. I tried to find out who had abandoned you on my doorstep. But to no avail. But I did find this in your tiny basket. It is a tooth with a gold filling. Find the owner of the tooth and you will have your answer. You will know the truth of who your real father is.”

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

“It's a walnut? Why do you keep playing these stupid tricks on me? A gold tooth indeed! I am blind, father, but not stupid. I have understanding of things by touching with my fingers!”

“Ah-ha! My blind son is a genius! You make me proud! Today is April first. I will start a new tradition. I will only play tricks on you once a year!”

I have lost everything. But I began with nothing so what did I really lose? Well, I did lose my love. To an idiot!

I am suffering. I am in pain. I have been cutting my wrists, trying to die! See you not my blood? And you ask me at a time like this for money?

My father said only one thing I could truly live by. All the rest of his advice would land me in jail.

I remember not my mother's embrace. But I do remember her fist in my face. Her foot in my rear end. I would invent something to help mankind forget its pains, but my mother blinded me as well.

Beauty a man always forgets. A woman's body he will barely remember. What she does and who she is - is eternal.

Woman, do not think that you can hold onto him from a distance. Men hate distance. This is why they war up-close and face-to-face. Do not wait too long, he will get away. Men are like fish. You will not catch him with your hands, but with a long pointy stick, my dear girl. Stab him good or you will not make a good first impression.

I can see a great army coming towards us. Yes, a rather large army. Many many many warriors. Indeed. Hmm. More men than we have. How exactly does one surrender?

I am grateful my boat sank. Would not have otherwise met my second wife. She was lovely for a while. Turned out to be completely insane.

They are holding a great celebration at the church. What in bloody hell do they have to give thanks about?

It was but a mere game that went bad. They took it much too seriously. Never was meant to start a war between two nations. Men will war over anything. I should put an end to this nonsense by telling everyone exactly how it was foolishly begun. Make them all look like the arses they are. But I'm too flattered they're going to fight over me.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Enough said. No more. I have said enough myself. And if that stupid dragon were also silent we could get some sleep.

I would have invented the spiked-hammer, if it did not already exist. Also the shield, the sword, and the arrow. Burp!

This cannot be true. Surely he has lied. And why not? He is a great liar. If he does not lie every day he would drop dead.

Do not that way. In that direction doom awaits. That path is riddled with bones. A road well traveled by the dead.

I was told to be here. To wait. For whom? I know not. I was only told he would be dressed in red and in his hand hold a large red fork. But I trust that those who have advised me know what they are doing.

Life, twists and turns, going up it pushes you down, going forward it pushes you backwards, its like an insane woman that sees things no one else can see, hears things no one else hears, and jumps off a cliff believing she is falling into the hands of an Angel.

The liar is a killer. The killer is a liar. There is no love in him for anything but lies.

Love is his religion. You cannot fool him. He is addicted to love in his heart. You cannot fool his body either. He knows the difference between love and lust.

I know what love is because I loved greatly once. So when a counterfeit comes - I can throw it away quite easily.

No, keep love away from me! I would rather this bottle of stinking rum! Both make me vomit! But rum is more fun!

They died in each other's arms. Poison I heard. Others say slit wrists. I say it was stupidity that did them in.

My ex-wife came to me in a dream. When I awoke I told my wife. She slapped me for cheating. All we did was talk. I never touched her!

I loved a woman. Then I loved another. The same feelings. I am confused. Is anyone good enough? Is no one special?

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I started to love her so much she made me forget my pain. Then she herself became painful and I remembered what I had forgotten.

I knew a woman who loved a man so much she killed him, but she did not die with him. She remarried eventually. I think it was not love.

I lost her. She has loved me so much I felt choked and sent her away. She choked me with love. I am love-choked.

Listen to your lover. Even if you have heard the same words a thousand times. And you surely will have to hear the same stories many times. Love always listens. When you stop listening know then that your love has died.

If you kill that which is dear to your lover, there is no reason for that lover to love you anymore.

“She has been my wife for ten years. I am starting to get the feeling she is suspecting she married a total stranger.”

“You live, you love, you change each other. After time neither are the same person. You must meet each other again.”

No, I will not see her! When I sit across from her I am not sure if she sees me! Whom it is she sees in me I do not know!

Dumb, stupid, imbecile, drunken-foolish-falling-down... explain again what became of my money?

She asked me to meet her in the middle of the night, and I expecting something of great importance, some dire emergency, some life and death situation, arose and sleepily met with her in secret. All she wanted to know is if I loved her. Please kill me.

Curses! Who was that most ugly man? Never has so trollish a gentleman entered this establishment. Is he half animal?

I found the letter you lost. I read it, though you told me not to. Do not read it again yourself. Take your own advice.

I was wondering about that arrow in your shoulder. Enemy or wife? Or one and the same?

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I was at tavern and overheard two ladies speaking of you bedding them both last night. Now is this true, my husband?

Who is better at love-making than I? Let him stand and come forth and best me at this orgy! Oh boy! That is huge! I surrender.

I cannot live without my Beatrice. She was the love of my life and the coconut of my eye. I know, I hate apples.

I do believe he just invented a whole slew of new insulting phrases. I never said the man lacked imagination.

Dead! I will find you all and kill you in your beds! Cowards! Yellow-bellied animal droppings! Lazy sewer-living vagabonds!

He's insane! He thinks we are people he knows! Surely we must show some measure of understanding towards a lunatic?

You were supposed to be my friends! How can you now say you know me not? When I get out of prison you're all dead!

He has stolen, and from the meanest, most murderous man in this city at that. Remember, we never saw him before in our lives.

When he gets it in his mind to do something - nothing can dissuade him. Like the time he set fire to the church.

I could not help but notice that you are muddy, blood here and there, and an arrow is sticking out ...Oh, never mind.

He is not happy who is not kind. He will not have who cannot find. He never loves who is never blind.

The woman wants me to believe I was the one in the wrong or else I do not love her! This is an outright lie she wants me to accept! What do lies have to do with love?

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Women can be cruel, and for no logical reason. And their memory of what wrongs they have done, well, non-existent.

I died a long time ago. I think it was the first time I ever loved a woman . She laughed at me and called me a dumb fool.

I have tossed myself over the bridge of love, am drowning in the river of happiness, have died in its deep comfort.

Why do you test me? I say I love you and all you say is this cannot be so. Either I am a fool or you are.

I have not stopped loving you, you have simply worn out your welcome. Cease throwing your arrows and I may love you again.

I was dreaming of a creature so hideous, so vile, so evil, so ugly, then realized it was my wife trying to wake me up.

The man longs for death, but no one will kill him, because his foolishness is way too entertaining.

If I wanted to kill you, you would be dead! Do you want me to kill you? You keep provoking me! You must want me to!

He was in town! That evil bastard returned, visited everyone in secret places and left again! Paid me a visit too! I did not know it was him. He had grown a beard and had not bathed for months. There was a black cake-like grime on his face.

You are hilarious, so hilarious, so funny and outrageous. I will take vengeance upon you and all your children!

I saw a vision of loveliness, a woman walking through the woods. I thought she was an Angel. Turns out she had escaped from the local asylum for the insane.

You are too serious and have no sense of humor. And why should I be afraid to say this, since you are about to kill me anyway.

I do not like people who think they are funny when they are not. If one enters this tavern, warn me. I want to kill him myself before he opens his mouth.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Yes, I forgot to warn you, a big mistake on my part, but think of it this way, at least you did not lose your legs and arms and head.

Why is the husband the last to know? And she has been doing this all along in secret? What the hell is crocheting anyway?

I want you to know something, but if I told you what it was - you would kill the messenger, so go and learn of it from another.

I went to the place in question, it is a horrible place, smells like death's home, please do not ask me to return there.

It is strange, Antavio, that your wife and my wife meet to exchange something but neither of us know what it is.

“Step right up, step right up.

“Do you dare to enter our tents with the strangest oddities from all over the world?

“Welcome, to our circus of freaks! You will be given bags to vomit into in case something truly disturbs you!

“See the fish woman of Greece! See how she swallows snails and puppy dog tails, as she writes a letter to her father, Poseidon!

“See the Ratman of the London Sewers! He steals babes from their cribs and devours them in filthy tunnels under your very feet!

“See the Wolverine Man of Ireland! Watch as he tries to escape his cage, which he has escaped from before! Beware!

“And a special show featuring the Dragon of Drugania! Fifty feet long! Ten feet wide! The most horrible bad breath!

“The Antman of Africa! He tends to attack and may eat you alive if you turn your back on him. Please exit his tent walking backwards!

“Marina the Psychic, she sees through the eyes of Paranha fish if she touches them. Don't ask her to look into your future! Such visions bite!

“The incredible ... crying woman. Hmm. Uh, loads of fun even if it is mundane.

“The Dog-boy of the Americas! Born of a mongrel and a real bitch of a housewife!

“The Mole-man of Iceland. Conversing with him is a real ice-breaker. Bah-dum-bum!

“Be shocked by the Giant-Woman of Ireland! She carries the Blarney Stone everywhere she goes! Kissing it costs extra!

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

"And the amazing Cyclops from Arabia! Pay no attention to his eye-patch!

"I have just been told, one of our monstrosities has escaped! Look! See how she comes now towards us! Horribly flapping!"

She loves me but she will not give her body to me. Explain this kind of woman's thinking to me, my dear Heredron.

She loves me. I wish she did not. The reason? She would kill me if I cheated. I am troubled. No more fun for me.

"I awoke to blinding light! I yelled and said, what is that? Then my wife was slapping me, saying! 'Fire! Get up, you fool!' Why would she call me a fool? Did I set the fire in my dreams?"

"I said, 'No, I do not have it with me. It fell out my hands while I was crossing the bridge that spans the gorge of eternal doom.' But my wife did not believe my story."

It is most certainly a different way of looking at the world, yes, his viewpoint is unique. Arrest him immediately for his originality.

I would not worry about that man that is following you. At least someone knows where you are at all times.

I was traveling through London by coach when I saw suddenly a most incredible sight - a fist coming at my face!

Billington, you randy old fiend! How is your collection of skulls and bones, and ladies' undergarments?

Today is the day we do battle here! Today many of us will die! This valley is your tomb! Welcome to your cemetery!

I have very few followers but they are quite special. They know what they want, they know what they like, they are not fools. But it is really fools that I am looking for, they will die for any stupid reason.

I saw something last night. I did. But I will not tell you what it was. It's a secret which I will take with me to my grave. She was naked with large breasts.

He is the kind of man who is invisible. Enters a room but no one notices him. Hides in plain view. Like

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

a chameleon he becomes the wall. He was here, now he is gone, and yet none of you noticed. How did I notice? Good question. I'm always on the lookout for the absurd. He has vanished, as if he never existed. You know, you know, you know, Mr. what is his damn name?

There is no hope for a man who has lost all hope. What good is hope once love is gone? I am drunk. I make no sense. I am so hopeless a human being.

To get and keep a man you must learn to cook at least one meal well. All you know is how to boil water! What hope have you?

How to get a woman to fall in love with you? Lies, lies, and more lies! You don't believe I am right? That women are not gullible? Bloody hell, even Eve believed a snake!

I am angry. My horse is dead. I came out of my house and there he was. Dead. Poisoned by my enemy no doubt! Or the damn horse simply wanted me to know how much he hated me.

I will find that devil of an assassin who will kill anyone for the right price, and I will save the world by killing *him*.

I am going to get badly drunk. My woman has run off with another man. Or at least he was dressed as a man. I will never know for sure. So I am going to get badly drunk.

“I will meet you at the tavern, a horse drawn carriage will meet us, from there to the sea, then we will sail to a new life on another continent. There we will have to find work to make ends meet.”

“And I'm leaving my rich husband because?”

He sent me a love poem. So nice of him. Meant for another woman he loves. But nice to get some mail now and then.

Tell her I barely love her, no, tell her I am almost in love, no, tell her my love is dying, hell, what right words? Tell her if I was truly in love with her I would be able to count the ways.

Show me a woman who has lost her heart to a man and I will show you a woman who makes her bed in Hades.

Show me a man who is in love with a wretched woman - and I will show you a miserable donkey who howls horribly at the moon.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I will not go to bed with you. You made love to another woman. I do not care if it was only a dream. A living woman I can at least kill in my great jealousy.

You sick, vile, wicked, evil, worthless man! How can I live with you? Make love to me correctly or give me death!

I will go home and she will give me some butter. I say butter because I do not want to refer to the real thing.

Doctor, a friend lies hurt and dying. I am in love with his wife. I love them both, but her more than he. Ah, forget I ever mentioned it.

You have always had a wild imagination. Never-ending fancies. Without your riches you would be called wholly insane.

I saw shapes and colors. Something floated in the air. There was music like the flutes of elves. I was in fairyland.

Try another line of reasoning. I am not convinced. I think you lie. Maybe if I pull a tooth the truth will appear.

What happened to me? I ran into a vicious dog! Or it ran into me! But I was drunk so a human could have been what bit me!

It was an awful place, ugly faces, the smell of vomit and urine, but the wine was very very good. Yet somehow that is not enough to make me happy.

Woman, who told you the world was round? The world is flat, always has been, always will be! Just like your arse!

“I could not help, sir, but notice that you hate your wife. I am a traveler-assassin. I can kill her while she is asleep and we are in-motion, for the right price.”

“No, I am a slave to her father who has me round his little finger since I owe him a great debt. But the fantasy alone made me quite happy for as long as it lasted.”

Tell them to leave at once or they will be executed! I am so tired of people who ask for so damn much and give back so damn little!

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I promised her a child and could not deliver. No reason to return home. I will to the other woman and my secret child.

“What is wrong with that woman? All I said was, 'I take you to be my wife forever.' Why do all women hold men to it?”

What is alive in that house is far more frightening than any creature ever ate a man in a forest. My wife's lamp is still lit.

Let us hide there under the bridge! We will be safer there with the rats and the homeless murderous thieving goblins of the underworld!

There they go, into that strange-looking house. What is that house? It is not a hotel. Who owns it, a devil's coven?

I was robbed coming here with your payment. A band of ruffians stole my purse and did stick a knife in me. Kill me and be done with it. I am dying anyway.

I know not where I was last night. I think I saw a bright light as I hid under a bed. Then some husband kicked me in the head.

I love making things difficult for men. They are too easy to play with. I think I will tell him today that I hate him.

Unfair! You are a woman! You can get away with such nonsense! I cannot do what you ask! I am a man, I will be hung from the gallows!

She is a woman and allowed by society to be weak and helpless, even if she is lying all the time about being weak and helpless.

I thought you were a man! Do you hate those three things between your legs? Find some wicked strength there!

I do like her, she is not fat or ugly. What the problem really is, is something I cannot say to her directly.

Why on earth would I call you to meet with me if I did not have something important to show you? See

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

this knife?

The man does not think he is greater than any other man. Go and fetch him. I need to ask him why he thinks he is so special.

Our old friend has become rich, discovered gold he did, saw him dressed like a merchant! We must rob him before he leaves town.

Your wife died, your house burned down, but cheer up, remember Job, things are not as bad as they are going to be.

She is driving me crazy. Prepare my trip to the house of the insane. The one place she will never look for me.

I have lost my mind. I have decided to go find it. And when I do I will hold onto it, until I meet the next woman I will fall in love with.

Is your husband like mine, boring and lazy in bed, but romantic and insatiable in the house of wayward women?

I know I hid it here. I put it here so I would find it later. Fish feces! My wife must have discovered it!

I saw something up in the sky. It was round and silver and glinted. I realized that my wife had thrown a pot at my head.

Give me a good reason why I should not cut off your legs. And please do not say you need them to walk around with.

“Father, I have a friend. He has a problem. He needs advice. He is in love. How does he kidnap the woman of his dreams and force her to marry him?”

“Why do I have to be the one to remind everyone to treat others nicely?”

Do not listen to him. He is trouble. If husbands are not trying to kill him, he is playing cards with the devil.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

If I had accepted all the advice of the many men I've met in my lifetime, I would have gone to jail a thousand-million times.

I heard a rumor that love exists somewhere in the heart. This is not true. It is really inside a bottle of whiskey.

There is a thing called life I once heard of. I have searched high and low but always managed to avoid finding it. Perhaps I will find it the morning I wake up dead.

It would make no difference if you were married to her. You would still be as miserable as a dog in chains.

I am sad. The woman makes me sad. Why? I love her, adore her, worship her. Yet I am sad. If this is love - murder me.

He asked me to marry him. Ha! The man is drunk. He did not notice I am also a man.

Remind me again why I should not kill you. And do not repeat the previous stupid response. You would die surely.

Dear, come here. Closer. A bit closer. Why do you back away? I am not going to cut it off, although I should.

I found out what is bothering him. His mouse is gone missing. It is only a pet mouse, dammit, not a horse run away, not a best friend who died, not even a lost fortune! He is weeping now. Go and comfort him.

My love, it is my birthday. You have not said anything to me. No gift. No greeting. Nothing. Is the reason the other woman?

Bake me a cake. A large one. For my husband. Big enough for a woman to leap out of and drive into him a long sword!

I do not know what came into him. One second he was happy, the next he was murderous. Must have been the ale.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Who said that? Step forward and reveal yourself! Be a man and die! And if you are a woman, then, go home and cook a poisonous meal for your entire family!

I never loved. Ever. It is a shame. I do not think love is in me. Else I would have found it somewhere in this black heart I own.

I have bedded a thousand women. Only one would I have married. I never did because I loved her too much.

The man cannot be bribed. I have tried. We must change our tactics. We must threaten his loved ones! Go and find someone he cares about!

Fool. You left her there? Alone on wicked Barley Street. At night? Go and see if she is still has head to kiss!

Say hello to Horace for me on the way to the tavern. Tell him his wife is great in bed. Oh, and pistols at dawn.

It is good I face the executioner. He was a friend of mine from my old school days. Always wanted to see him again.

An unfortunate set of circumstances. I wish I could re-repeat them. Events would then always work out this horribly.

Too late. The deed is done. He is dead and buried. You should have told me I was to have waited until you arrived.

Do not let her in, she is insane, she will want to tell me how much she loves me, and I will have none of that.

Life is bizarre. It has too many unpredictable twists and turns. It makes one want to jump off a bridge even if he is happy.

I find myself in times of trouble. Last night Mother Mary came to me.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Love hurt me not. I rely on your blessings. God bless love with insight and wisdom for it is a destroyer of cities.

Love has trodden me, rolled over me like a wheel and left me there for dead. I gasp for breath. I hope for light.

It is a terrible thing to hate what I once loved. Love is dead. Cursed am I for I am a walking dead man.

What I have seen I loathe. I weep so that I cannot see through my river of tears what my heart would hate.

My sorrow knows no bounds. It has overflowed into the sea and murdered all sea-matter. Even the land-creatures have begun to weep.

They raced this afternoon. Both idiots running through London's streets like Roman torch-bearers. One of them caught fire and perished.

Trampled by a horse! Dead you say! Buried this morning? How long you think I should wait before I can approach his widow?

Behind a tent at the festival, he pulled up my dress! My fiendish husband could not wait until we returned home!

He came in and annoyed my customers. I am a man who likes humor, but drunken ares-revealing goes too far.

If I looked any harder I still would not find her. She is a woman in love. She would live among rats if it meant she could still be with him.

Women are like ships, always crashing into rocks during stormy seas, always throwing men overboard to their deaths.

I loved her. I truly did. Why would she do this? Who treats love this way but a daughter of a devil who knows not love?

Sometimes I think you speak nothing but words mysteriously hollow.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Words. I hate words. They are for people who will never ever do anything. Give me action. Do not bore me to tears.

I see opportunities but I cannot attempt. I dare but I do not. I could but I would not. Because whenever I did try I never ever saw it come to fruition.

Evil. You are evil. Evil is the best word to describe you. Bad is not good enough. Evil evil evil. Witch might suffice.

“I left the child at the steps of the church as you instructed. Will he grow to be a priest?”

“I doubt it. He is a she.”

Why is it whenever I think of a clear blue sky I always imagine some evil, dark dragon descending upon me?

I never liked you. Your eyes are too close together. You remind me of a rat. And you have whiskers too.

I am sorry, so very sorry. I am sorry. Again, sorry. Please forgive me. I did not understand. You are the local hangman, am I correct?

We stood upon light-filled beach watching night slip from our grasps, never to return again to the Gates of Eden where our hearts were simultaneously beating.

I did pray to heaven above that light would lift again our love, and bring us safely to its shore and leave us happy evermore.

In that darkened land of pain we felt the beginnings of an eternal storm, which would scare our love away and leave us both most empty.

The darkness enveloped us as we screamed and fell into a black black dream, no matter what we tried to do we both did weep - boohoo boohoo.

We lay under an apple tree, she smiled and sang and laughed with me, suddenly her face did frown as clouds gathered and dusk crawled down.

Of course I care about you more than words can say. I am not a poet. Nor do I like poetry. Would you like some tea?

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Find the minister! Whatever his name is! My wife is dying! Her mortal soul is in danger! Why is the man always hiding? Does he believe he is not welcome here?

I went to the church but its doors were closed. Happily the tavern's doors are always open.

I drank too much. I know not where I was last night, nor what I did. Surely some unknown woman is with my child!

You are most serious today. Did you not bed your wife last night? Is she not enough for you? Try a house of ill-repute.

Well, is it him or not? Are you sure or are you not? Do not come to me with "I do not know."

Relate the news to him carefully or he may kill you. Try using a carefully worded preface like, "You are going to kill me when I tell you this but..."

Am I dead? Surely I am dead. Is this the land of the dead? Oh, rats, it's just you. What did you use to hit me with, my wife?

I am going to hang myself. But only after I drink myself under several tables.

He is a player of games. He is playing with his life. Too precious a coin to gamble with.

The old King is dying. Prepare all. The King's funeral. The Queen's wedding.

"There was an earthquake. Many died. But do not ask me where it happened. News travels slow. The dead travel even slower."

"The dead travel more slowly.' Did you hear that? That man should stop drinking."

He is a liar. He stole from widows. He is a hypocrite and a thief. This is why they love him. In him they see themselves.

The man has talent. All others around him are talentless. This is why they will not give him his hire.

No, no, I am not in love! The flowers, I got them from a cemetery!

Ohhhh, that woman, that ... wench with lovely priceless eyes!

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Why be a lying actor when you can be a rich, lying merchant! You can act as you work! It earns more!

They are leaving the city! All of them! Pack the bags! I do not know why, just do it! They know something we do not!

I have never seen anything like this. It is special. Different. Nothing like it have I ever seen. I want more.

The poor will get less and the money will be given to those who fight wars to gain treasures.

Peace? We need it. If not for peace who would still be left alive to fight the wars?

It's not that difficult to understand life, you live it with joy while others are trying to steal your joy as you live it.

He is sick the poor fellow. There is no remedy for his illness. Love has turned to hellish sulfur that burns forever.

Never has he looked so sad. He may kill himself. Leap off a bridge, drink poison, knife his own heart, or marry a vile woman to punish himself.

Last I looked in the mirror I was happy, handsome. Now my face mirrors my insides. I carry all of my sins on my eternal frown.

He is an ugly fellow both within and without. He only goes out at night. And that to commit the darkest of deeds.

Why do I have the feeling that he cannot be trusted? Perhaps it is the dark cloud that always hovers over him.

She has hurt me. I know not what to do. I love her and I hate her. This love thing is most disagreeable.

I decide with whom I join forces. As for said king I would sooner throw myself into a pit of snakes. Less painful.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Did you ever put your finger into a pot of fat, how easily it went in and out? It is like that.

I cannot stop thinking of her. I bedded her but she prefers not to remember me. Am I so small?

Who told you I was deaf then tempted you to insult me? They are no doubt gone out before pleasure of seeing you die.

I own a horse. Yes. And I rent a stable. But the real interest is in the stable girl.

I thought you were a man of honor until now. Please remove your hands from my wife's breasts.

If life were not so dull it might actually be worth investigating. Since it is not, damn it all to Hades.

If you were not so lazy you might actually accomplish something, as in something that can be routinely accomplished.

Wonderful night. I just stayed in bed and stared at the walls. I've never done that before. I might do it again.

Yes, Your Honor. I kidnapped, mutilated, and murdered her. Please understand, I was in love with her.

Get me a rope I want to hang myself. Better I do it now than when she arrives home and does it for me.

I swam across a river to meet her. I nearly drowned. Tonight I must climb a mountain. With these two weak wrists.

I wanted to love her. She wanted to love me. But love got in the way and kept us apart.

They almost came to blows. Over mere stupidity. But then name one war that was ever intelligent.

She has not appeared. Perhaps she is offended. Or she is away doing her usual crazy things.

I will not speak to him. I proved I am smarter. I have better things to do than try to impress a man offended.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

The first lie a liar tells is to himself. The first lie is that he is not a liar. All other lies revolve around one idea: that he does not know where any dead bodies are buried.

Watch out for his shadow! Everything about him is untrue!

The love I lost was true. The loves I found next were mere shadows of the first. The love that was lost was the love that always meant more.

I was groping in the dark, and was often pricked, and suddenly understood that I was in a room filled with roses!

I no longer fear the fire in the eyes of my enemies. I am dead inside. If they kill what is already dead, who cares?

Slay that raging sea! It has haunted me since my birth! Put your thumb into the mountain that burns with lava and halt its anger!

Within the space of an hour love was found, then lost, found again, lost again, by then I no longer cared if it ever returned.

I am lost. How do I regain what is lost? It came and went like the wind. Whenever I try to grab it it slips through my fingers.

I practiced, I fantasized, I read, I looked at drawings, but once my heart touched hers, the passion died.

I have found the man of my dreams. He is rich, handsome, and rarely leaves home. He is blind as a bat.

No one has ever done this before! We are geniuses! Who ever dreamed of sending a circus bear to rob jewels?

You are an animal and know nothing of mercy. You will never find love. You are hated. I say this because I like you.

Ah, children. How they run about your feet and tempt you to trip them. But that would not be appropriate. So, it is good to have a cat or dog to kick.

I did this to myself. I have doomed myself. I am on my way to a loveless altar. I'm marrying her only for her money. I am a man on fire. Hell sends plenty of invitations to people like me.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I taught him most everything he knows. The rest he taught himself. He now has much to teach me. Do not trust him.

Let there be peace in the land! What think? How do I sound? Do I sound sincere? Or like my usual hypocritical self?

Throw him to the lions! What? No lions? What do you mean they are being bathed? What do I care if they stink?

I never should have poisoned him. Why didn't anyone tell me he owed me money?

"I was trying to help. I lost my grip. I did not push him off the bridge, I was trying to save him. Just ask the drunk."

"That drunk is also blind."

"Well, ask him if he heard any pushing."

No one told me it would lead to death. Dismemberment yes but not death.

Do not tell me about him. I will learn all I need to know about him in the dens of iniquity. Starting with the brothels.

"Strength of youth, carrot root, spider's legs, workman's boot. Long life, for your wife, keep it straight, propagate."

"Does this witch know what she's doing?"

"If it falls off you can't recommend her now can you?"

Help me! She cannot keep her hands off me! At first I thought it was fun and games! I finally understand that I am not young anymore!

I am sure I can reproduce the sound. It was like ahhh hahhh ohhh ohhh heeehh hhheeh. What else sounds like that?

Outside the house the storm complained. Inside the house my wife complained. - Cousin of Shakespeare

You are the laziest man I ever met. Next you will be asking me to feed you by spoon at the dinner table.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

If I go to church with you today I will fall asleep, fall out a window, and Paul will not be there to raise me up.

He hurt me. He twisted my arm. I had to tell him everything. And yes, I would indeed make a terrible martyr.

My wife is here? Now? Hide the wine! Girls, flee, flee! Or she will gut you all. Ah, my darling wife, how I love you!

Let him die the death of a worthless, foolish clown, for jesters receive no honor except from their fellow freaks and geeks!

Your crimes are many, you foul devil! Go and fetch an angry, betrayed woman eager to torture this shameless man!

Tonight to swords! I will fight thee with all my might and then I will bed your wife! All your offspring I will kill as would a male cat!

Ah, the sea, a woman in every port, a parrot on my shoulder, storms to the left and the right, sea-serpent up my arse!

I lost my wedding ring! I do not remember where I was last night, or this morning, or this afternoon! She will kill me!

I could not stop her. She was insane. She burst in, set the bed on fire, yelled incomprehensible gibberish, then she fainted.

I shot an arrow in the air. I do not know where it went. But I did hear someone scream.

My copy of the book is well hidden deep in the past, here where it cannot be found, and living on into tomorrow.

“The Dandelion does not seem to exist. I have looked everywhere for it, yet everyone quotes it. Do you have a copy?”

“My mother was an insane, thieving whore! She robbed anything that was not nailed to the floor. She stole a copy of the Dandelion from a client. The book said 'If you're too ugly a boy, women

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

will never love you. So you must steal them.”

“Very wise, indeed. Great insight. Like seeing saw into the future. Yes. How were you supposed to steal them?”

“You are joking, aren't you?”

You see the true substance of women's hearts, sir. You have no false illusions. None at all. Admirable.

I will marry her. She will not be happy but she will be mine. If she realizes her mistake she will leave me. My heart will be broken beyond repair. She may try to take her own life. I must give her no time to think. I must throw arrows of self-doubt at her constantly. I must kill her love for anyone but me.

Love that sits in a separate room, will grow old and die. So I won't worry about handsome young man. Money is also love.

She is smart, she will see the difference between love and security. Love is better. But security saves from too much worry.

The twist in the play is come. The turn of the plot. Now it is up to her. Being a woman she will try women's tricks.

I gave him the message and the purse filled with gold. Also the ticket to travel. He accepted and he will consider.

That animal is out there again! When will it cease its roaring? No, do not throw it meat again, it will return!

Sorrow planted is watered by time and the fruit of sadness is uprooted by women's delight. I quote the Dandelion.

I ate something in the woods, some small mushroom growing under a tree. Days later I was found laughing and naked in a stream.

Tell me truth. If you know what truth is. For truth is practiced always and not just when reading the gospel.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

He is as ugly inside as outside. He speaks rude things while around ladies. As funny as a jester without a head on his shoulders.

The man has a big arse! He is himself as big an arse as that arse of his! That arse of an arse!

The new cleaning woman she is attractive. Except for the nose. Oh that nose! How does she not always fall forward?

Try not to wake her when you are busy. I want it to be a surprise. New curtains are always enjoyed best at sunrise.

I think that love is a give and take proposal. You give and she takes. If she ever gave something back, what kind of impending hell would it mean?

I should have known she would never love me. When first we met all she ever spoke of was her damn horse.

I cannot deny the clear blue sky mirrored in her dear blue eyes, and will never forget, the fist I met, from the jealous man standing nearby.

I sing a song of the girl I loved under an apple tree, an apple fell, it tasted swell, also the worm agreed.

“Well, look what the dog dragged in after ten years gone missing! You old pirate! What come you to steal? Or whom did you come to murder?”

“Aaarghh! I have come neither to steal nor kill, you old wine-barrel of a whore! I have come to ask for your hand in marriage!”

“Give us a kiss and empty your purse, you stinking, beer-bellied, dried-out old-fart of a sailor! Happy to see you again!”

“You are as beautiful an angel as when I first saw you!”

“And you are still as big a liar as the day we first met!”

Are we talking about the same thing? I speak of a walk in the woods. You think I mean a lying down in the bushes?

You can have the house in the city. The house in the country is mine since you hate the smell of animals

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

like me.

I have the King's Crown. What else do I want? Ah, also the Queen's necklace. And nothing more. Except yes also that small Greek statue. Nothing else will I take. Except. Wait. Oh, also that sad-looking, lazy old guard dog. He looks so ignored. And nothing more. But ah yes the dog will want his bone. The crown, the statue, the necklace, the dog, and his bone. And this carpet, yes, and also that goblet. Now I have too much to carry and must put something back. Let me see. If I take that suit of armor I cannot take the statue. It really is a royal pain in the arse to be a thief.

I will marry him, and poison him on the wedding night, before he mounts me and turns me into a fat pregnant cow.

Kill her? I am in love with her. How can I kill what I love? I am still trying to get over the last woman I killed.

All the world is mad except for me. If you disagree with me find someone else to agree with you. That is what I do.

Keep the treasures! Throw them away! I no longer want to be a thief! I give up stealing! But I will keep the skulls.

My brother is gone mad! He thinks he is a Gink-thrich. What a Gink-thrich is I do not know. And I do not want to know.

You left my watch on the table by the bed next to the dead body? Killing a man was what you were sent to do, not leaving rich evidence behind!

Woman, I do not have that much energy. No man does! I am not as young as I used to be. You must let me get old.

I thought she was an angel when we married. After the first child was born a devil must have entered her.

When a dragon shows its face - you throw spears at it, do you not? Wait until my wife opens the door.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

You are the worst swordsman and warrior I ever met. Perhaps you should go back to sewing-up wounds, doctor.

Yes. I killed him. He was dead. I checked his pulse. Emptied his purse. How he showed up at your door I do not know.

Yes, I understand. I am to go and find out what I can about the illicit love affair, and return quickly. And do not stop over and gossip at the local newspaper.

My dear, calm is essence of life, health of heart, peace of mind, healing to the soul. Adultery is a big deal.

If things get any more complex I will hang myself! No! I will kill someone so they will certainly have to hang me!

You have a child from another man being seen to by another family? I have certainly found an empty gold mine!

"This man from your past! Why did you not tell me he existed? And do not insult me with, 'I thought he was dead!'"

No, I do not love him. He is a horrible man. Where did he get the idea that I loved him? Some evil, little bird lied to him about me. Someone wanting to make a fool of him, or someone wanting to greatly annoy me. I will send a bird to catch a bird.

Die for love if you will to die for anything! Why die for treasure, or fame, or power? I'd rather die for a woman's undergarments!

He would selflessly sacrifice himself for a worthless cause. He is of such a nature. Pure idiocy is not the stuff a martyr should be made of.

I dislike it intensely when people speak when I am interrupting. Let me speak, and when I am gone, you may converse.

The most annoying thing is to be constantly interrupted by someone who agreed not to be on speaking

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

terms.

I could not tell which one was him that I might arrest him. He was dressed as a woman. There were many women at that women-only party. It's not my fault he likes to be around women.

My love, when you arrive, pause. I already know what you would say. Then say what you want to say.

You have revived a wind that did not stir a dream. You have awakened a shaken hope that tried to kill itself.

When we look our eyes change. I see your varying colors. You see my light and my dark. Our tears merge.

When did you learn to rest a head on someone's shoulder? To kiss a hand? What brilliant rainy, lonely night brought you shivers of enlightening delight?

If I go will you go with me? If you are gone I am lost. When together we are found. Both of us apart and the whole world has died.

Your mind is sick. So is your soul. As well as your heart. Religion tells us all three are one and the same. You are three times ill.

Yes, your honor, I did do this unwholesome deed against this good woman, but, I do not normally grab women by their breasts when they pass by in horse-driven coaches. This is my first and only and single offense. And furthermore, all of these witnesses who say I've done this before, are fiends themselves, if you look carefully into their histories you will find they have committed far worse offenses than I. Who paid them to speak against me I do not know. And I do not know all of this because they are my acquaintances, I simply know about them through second-hand information. And we all know hearsay cannot be trusted. I know all of this because... because... I am a terrible liar, am I not? Your honor. When it comes to any woman who is well-endowed, I can never help myself, I must grab them all!

I held my breath but I needed to breathe desperately. The man was of a hideous, gaseous nature that night, and I was caught afterward vomiting into a large gold goblet.

Tell her I order her to meet me at midnight by the statue of the cupid, there I will meet here and there we will kiss. This will be her second and final chance. If she sends a man disguised in a dress again I will begin murdering everyone.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

You want me to lie, say I was the one who tried to kill the King? Do I have a jackass's hoof imprinted on my face?

I'll have nothing to do with this mess! You created it and want to pass the trouble onto me! And without even the benefit or decency of financial compensation!

Throw him out for he is trash, his family is trash, his children are trash, his dogs are better people!

Go! Travel the entire world! Write a book! Make a fortune! Live comfortably! Maybe this will get you out of my hair!

I am weeping! I am trembling! And overjoyed! All my daughters are getting married! My ugly brood have all found blind men!

What did you do to deserve being sent to this tower? Do not answer the question! Do you think I care? Crawl to me!

A most excellent choice in torture, your Highness. Ha! Madness is indeed the most inescapable form of hell on earth.

Throw him into the pit of rats, no, the pit of stakes, no, wait, to the tower, let him live with my unholy Queen!

I thought she was thoughtfully rubbing my feet until I realized it was a snake and she was not in bed beside me!

Who dares disturb me? Off with his head who wakes me in the middle of -- oh, it is you, come to bed already!

You will build two houses? One for you and the other for your dog? How thoughtful. I alone will live in the larger of the two. You will go live with the one you truly love.

I cannot decide if I want a small or big house. I can afford to build both types, so I will indeed build both, one right next to the other. And I will live in either the larger or the smaller, depending on the

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

height of the woman who will be staying the night.

If you drink too much, you may fall in love with a her that turns out to be a him, then in utter shame you will end up killing yourself!

She is interesting, mysterious, witty, but slightly absent-minded and clumsy. She is hiding something important. I suspect that she is much smarter than she pretends to be. Curses! If I marry her I will never win an argument.

I did everything I wanted to do with my life, this is why I am eternally and perpetually bored!

If I knew what what I wanted to do with my life I would anywhere other than here doing it!

I am going into hiding. I will play a fool in a traveling circus. They will throw rotten apples at me.

Do not ask me what life is all about! Do you really expect to find the answer in a pub among people who cannot think straight?

You were supposed to arrive yesterday. You are too late. I sold the lion to another. Good thing for you. The lion ate him.

I cannot bear it any longer! Some woman out there is miserable because of me! She is sad because I refuse to marry her! When did I become Romeo? When was the Eternal Seal of Great and wonderful Lover stamped upon my face? My mind is dizzy! The world is upside down! I thought I was a monster of a man not the friend of all men! She will murder me with kindness. I would take my own life with a sword. Behold, there she is at the entrance to the tavern! Tell her I was killed, having fallen into a deep abyss when I was drunk! Then stay with her and comfort her! Stop her from leaping off any cliffs. I will pay you handsomely! I will change my name, move to another town, and be much more careful from now on. A woman's grip is like that of a crocodile! Her heart is like its scales! You have saved me from a life of eternal drowning! She is too good for me! This is better for both of us! Trust me! I am a killer of crocodiles!

I will bother you no more, sir. My heart is sad. Your once kind, sweet words are like dead flowers to me now.

She loves me and writes me poetry! Although drunk that night she still remembers who I am! That big

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

big fat ugly lady! Write this down: Dear Madam, I do not recall you. When were we supposed to have met? If I do not remember you the child cannot be mine.

I love thee like morning loves sun, like night loves moon, like flowers love the day and bow in worshipful adoration.

He is still alive. I could not go through with it, somewhere a pig started screaming. People began to appear on the street. You know how those animals sound, like I had already begun killing.

You stinking drunk, filled with foul farts. When are you going to see a doctor about that smell, you gaseous, old fool. Hogs flee from you.

Onions and garlic, both are good for your health, and to keep away vampires and queers.

Do not look now but here he comes to kill you with sword in his hand. I told you not to look!

“I will be hiding behind the sun, riding on the moon, breathing in the clouds, drinking in your love.”

“You dare read poetry at this table? Are you queer and secretly in love with me?”

This is the worst advice ever given to me. If I do this, I am a dead man come morning. And when I am gone, where will you be hiding in your great denial?

Woman, if I wanted your dangerous opinion I would have asked you to write it down, I would have sent it to the king, and he would be taking off your pretty head instead of mine.

I cannot follow you back to that place. It is an awful place where death dwells. I will never go back into your room.

Love pays the rent? Love's name is not on the lease! Let love do what it does best, feed the heart not the money-pouch.

I love everything about women. Money does not matter. I have lived with love in poverty. She hated it but I did not.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I will not marry him if he does not love only me! He calls out the names of other women during love-making! Once the name of a man!

I love her. She loves me. No matter if she is not rich, pretty, or has no property. The truth? She is pregnant.

Please, please, please, no! How in heaven's sweet name did that dangerous creature escape? Inside help? This is an animal zoo!

He looks good in a woman's dress. I would marry him if he would have a man as his wife. Unfortunately I have no dowry.

There will be prison walls between us. You will not be able to strangle me anymore.

Ah, so, sir, in your marriage, she has become husband and you the wife! Go and retrieve that which was castrated!

It was him. You told me he was dead. He therefore escaped the flames. You may be good with a knife but you are terrible at setting fires.

Do you not have anything better to do than annoy me? Court a lady? Torture an enemy? Dig for treasure? Invade a village? Rob a grave?

Do not stand between me and my dream. It is a worthless dream, what is the use in standing there?

Her husband stood there with sword in hand. So I started singing. He sat down to listen. I sang until he fell asleep. Thus I always escape death. But sooner or later I'll run into a husband who is tone deaf.

I was wondering when you would come. You waited this long to kill me? Or were you in prison all this time?

He is a brute, an animal, and he smells like a horse. Of course I am talking about that very sexy stable boy.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Come here, Ornatio, the time has come to set my plan in motion. Now, remind me of what my plan is.

"Women are like flowers. Once you pluck them they start to wither." Do not ask me what this means, I am quoting someone else.

A man is like a dog. He climbs your leg and will not let go unless he is kicked with brute force. And he also always comes back.

When dating women, they can lie but you cannot. For your turn to lie you must wait until after the marriage ceremony.

Men are like worms. They crawl through cracks in the coffin's rotting wood, devour the flesh, and lay eggs in the skull.

Who she is I do not know. What she is I will find out. All women everywhere are insane, so anything they do never surprises me.

For once I beat her at her game. But this game is not ended. It will end when I am dead. Then she will be satisfied.

He, my wife, whoever HE is, must be a better man than you are a woman.

You twist things around! Liar! Very well. For now I will lay down my sword. But pray I never find out who he is.

"It's true. I am in love with someone other than you, and that she is not a man."

"She? You are despicable. You have not even the decency to cheat on me with a man."

"You would have hated me twice as much."

"True! But such an adultery would have been socially acceptable!"

"You are in love with a man and not I, your wife? You heartless beast! King of the pigs! How is that even possible? Can he give you a child? What can he give you that I cannot?"

"Cheerfulness. He smiles more than you do."

### The Cousin of Shakespeare

Do not test me. I will lose everything to protect her. I would shout my love from the mountain tops. I will go now to the tavern and make my drunken announcement.

You would spread a lie, and bring shame upon your whole family, to protect an old friend? This kind of love you have never poured even on your own wife!

If you wish to continue your search, you will only find heartbreak at the other end of the journey. I can stab you in the chest now and save you the trouble.

I know that you are depraved in front, but you are not a Sodomite in back. Or I married a more interesting man than I thought I did.

Ha! I smell her stench, if that's what you mean by sweet perfume! I will find her and cut her pretty face.

So, you are in love with another woman! Who is she? I want to meet the kind of woman you desire nowadays, to see what I do not look like in a mirror!

I have been warned! My wife is on her way! And she knows! No use in hiding my adulteries anymore. Get out of here! Save yourself! I am the one who must die!

Bring me an ale, barmaid. And bring that beautiful body of yours too! Husband or not, I am in a fighting spirit!

Hide me! A large fat woman is in love with me! Just for the night, until she is no longer drunk and forgets what I look like!

You stupid drunk! Let go of me! What on earth made you think it was a snake?

I could not breathe! They had stopped my breath. The size of them ... they were, AH! Much too large for a man's hands! I will have nightmares!

I see a light in the woods. A man with a lantern? A ghostly figure wandering? Or the devil with his head on fire!

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

If you were a man you would go see what that noise downstairs was! Useless man! Must I always wait for the noise to find us?

I am not afraid of a moonless night in haunted woods, fog, dogs howling, owls hooting, I am just too tired to go exploring.

If ever an idiot this is him. If ever a fool this be he. If ever a man lost his mind this fellow forgot he ever had one.

Look where you aim your arrows! The enemy is outside the castle walls not inside! Are you all blind baboons?

Look! A fairy on snowy wings! I will dare to catch it and squeeze it to death in the strong grip of my hand! What disappointment, it is but a pastry!

We must swim or we will die! Damn the alligators! Damn our miserable lives! Damn the lying bastard who gave us these misleading directions!

Ah, love all around us. Genuine. Unadulterated. Wholesome. Pure as pleasant, white wine on a summer day. This scenario is too good to be true. I sense the presence of death. Let us leave this place before we end up shaking Death's shadowy hand.

I could not speak to him. He was occupied. It is not wise to interrupt a man while he is committing a murder.

Never did I see such vileness. I will never forget the sight. Teeth rotting and falling out. I am inspired and have discovered a new medical profession.

Am I the patron saint of the black filth that dwells between the toes? Why do you ask me to wash your disgusting feet? Bah!

I followed my own shadow home from the tavern. The moon was above me guiding me all the way. I lost sight of it as I near my house. I still wonder greatly what exactly it was up to.

I will not live in a world where love is not worshiped! May death take me before my time!

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Love? Who dares mention The Despicable Thing? Grab that man, take him to alley, and whip him until you see bloody, white bone.

I guarantee, he will not marry anyone else but me. Not because he loves me, but because he knows I will kill him if he marries another.

This is not the correct description of how I left him, someone must have moved his body. Tell me again how they are saying he died?

Stop suggesting it. No. I will not. No matter what you say I cannot. It is a bad thing. Evil. Stop it. Stop. Okay. Okay. If you insist.

Many women are lucky never to have married me! Just ask any woman I ever bedded! They will explain to you the terror of my size!

My friend, the closest I am to being a romantic is getting a barmaid drunk and finding a back-alley doctor to abort it.

Hear ye the news! The King will re-marry! After the Queen's head is lopped off! And all in the same day!

Marry her before her belly blows-up like a lazy sailor's ale-filled stomach and she is shamed like a farmer found loving his sheep. Both are terrible, horrible metaphors, but I never said I was a poet.

Wretched man that I am. Most miserable among the masses. Sadder than a burning priest with passions unreleased.

I did tell you, but you were drunk. It is not my fault she has run off with another man. Blame the bottle you were drinking from.

I think you should leave the country. This lie has gone too far. Return after the unnecessary war you began is over.

So I was in bed with his wife, yes, but he tried to kill me! Not her! Does that madman not know it takes

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

two to have an carnal affair?

Would you believe I am drunk? Would you believe I am blind? Would you believe I am insane? Tell me what you would have sympathy for? I want to get out of here alive.

Prepare yourself for the worst: the best parts of our lives are past and gone and will never return, doomed are our futures, death is our only peace, what comes in the after-life no one really knows for sure, and if there is anything after the after-life, none of us are going there. Happiness, although finding it intentionally is against all odds, but unintentionally the only choice that remains. We have nothing to be happy about, so smiling makes no sense whatsoever. We must become lost men, and be happy, without cause, without proper or reasonable motivation. Insane people correctly see the things that dwell beyond reason. They do not worry about devils as we do, or solitary shadows, night-demons, or eyeless ghosts. They see them all the time. They are like old friends. It is late. I am leaving. Before I get too drunk. The night is cold. My wife is worried. When she sees I am not dead, she will kill me.

I am sad but I feel well. I do not understand why I am troubled. I need a word to describe this mysterious melancholy but I cannot find it.

I am lost. This new profession used to have some semblance of manly honor attached to it. Methinks I will go back to grave-robbing.

If anyone asks, tell them the gifts are for the King, from the Queen, who is on vacation. The King has also sent gifts, men with swords to take off her head.

Sir, you have asked the vilest of things. Carrying a man's personal belongings? I usually try to travel lightly.

I do not need comfort, I need vengeance. Find out where she is, who she is with, and return to me with both his heads. One to hang on the gate of my castle, the other to serve to her as breakfast in bed. If she does not recognize it I will be disappointed. I hate having to explain myself.

I am a realist. I see life as it is. Black I call black and white I call white. But if my wife is near, I have to be unrealistic, and have to agree to her many shades of gray.

Ah, look at those two. Young, in love, a bright future ahead. They are so doomed to disappointment.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

A perfect fit, she said. A perfect fit indeed. The woman will not talk about anything but her latest purchase of gloves.

Please, do not ask me again. I cannot do this thing you ask. You cannot convince me. Get your tongue out of my ear!

“It is a new sport called, Kill the Jester. Give him bad advice on how to cheer up the King, then wait and see in what manner he will be executed.”

“Impersonate the King. The King loves to see impersonations of himself.”

“Really?”

“This dungeon is not bad. All manner of insects and rodents to eat. Now and then a dead bird is thrown through the bars.”

An army comes! An army comes! Bye bye to everyone and good luck! I was hired only to be the town crier!

My mother would punch me before putting me to bed. Then Sunday morning go and apologize to someone else.

We will have saved each other's lives. But when this storm is over, I will punch you in your bloody face!

You ask me how can I tell this is a ghost-ship? Everyone on board was alive, look at them, now they are all bloody dead!

Alms for the poor! Alms, please! I like the life of a beggar! How else can you get a rat's eye view of ladies' ankles and not get whipped?

Like I said, torture me all you like, I cannot tell you anything because I do not know anything. My teachers were right about me, in one ear and out the other.

First, do not wake me in the morning. Second, wake me not in the afternoon either. Third, nor in the bloody evening. For I am now dead to this world and wish to see no one.

You are tempting me! Keep your hands at your sides, vile woman! Touch me not, or there will be hell

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

to pay!

What was it that made me fall in love with you? Now I know now why they call it falling instead of rising. One forgets what it was that once made their temperature rise.

I am a devil that has not entered the gates yet, I have merely leaned against them.

You certainly something of a devil. Are you a woman, or a demon pretending to be one?

What do priests know of physical love? Touch one down there and he quickly arrives at a most biblical conclusion.

“To hell with your pleasures! You have now asked me to do with my hands - things my mother taught me were against the Church!”

“Really? And where did your mother learn about these things?”

“They will cut out my tongue! You will have to divorce me, your only way to pleasure will be cut off.”

“Brute. If they cut out your tongue, you will never sleep with me again! I would eliminate your very manhood. There will be three reasons for you never wanting to visit me again! I am going to get myself a knife! Wait right here, I'll return shortly.”

“When you go mute is the day I will be silent.”

“Alas, now I know you are a miserable, lonely old tree.”

How long will you torment me? Take half of what I own and go back into the sewers from where you came!

“You dare call me the darkest time of the night? In the light of day I will exposing my very arse for all to see! And you will be ashamed to call me your wife!”

“I agree. Because, it's not much of an arse to look at.”

My fingers would wrap themselves around your neck if I did not love you. Leave me to my sorrows, woman of darkness.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Tell me again about how you robbed the graves at night and raped the dead. Cheaper than a whore I guess.

Hellish woman. I have a dream to see you hanging by your pretty neck, but methinks you are already dead.

I would rather eat a booger than kiss you again. Quite frankly, your kiss and your boogers, must both taste alike.

I followed them to tavern. They took a room upstairs. I heard the noises of love-making. But why did you ask me to spy on husband and wife?

Your beauty, poor dead Delia, was desired by many hearts, your love desired more than the best wine, but your money more than your very life.

“She is a woman of the modern times and does as she wishes. If you like, I can kill her for you, and be done with it.”

“Do not kill her. But tell her I never want to see her again. That will be enough. Spread the word that I rejected her first. This is what I get for bedding a woman once and then walking away. Very well, also tell everyone I am a whore-monger. One of us must give up our honor, or there will be a war between both our nations, and thousands will die. And I will find myself a better place to live, close to a tavern.”

“She refused your marriage offer. She said marrying you would be like marrying a dead tree, lifeless and yet still with splinters.”

“Who does she think she is to speak of me that way? She cannot refuse my offer. Not in such a diseased fashion!”

This town drinks too much. Stupidity lingers. The manure rises and falls like the sun and stares at you retardedly, like the moon.

I saw a man with no face! He wore a hooded cloak! It was death himself! Or my dead husband has taken over the job!

Have you not known me for a long time? When have I ever lied to you? The incident with your wife does not count.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

I saw a most beautiful flower. Yellow with many petals and a smell like honey-roses. Then I awoke and oh the horror!

I do not belong here. Why did you invite me? Is that a real person they are about to sacrifice on that altar?

She sees some letters backwards. Bad eyes, poor girl. She thinks all fences warn people to beware of god.

Do not look at me as if you've seen a ghost. I once told you I am hard to kill, did I not? So you re-married.

No, I do not go to church. The last time I attended my bread and wine were stolen.

You stinking, old, gaseous fool. When you pass wind - all of nature holds its collective breath. But nature has to breathe sooner or later, and all things near you die sooner than later.

I do not care if the man is twice your size. You, my husband, are a coward. You are twice my size, and I fight you, do I not?

I could not find it. Perhaps it is there but hidden. Or it was stolen. The same way we stole it to begin with.

Stupidity and violent temper are a pair of criminals that once in league cause a flood of grief that engulfs all.

Tell that stupid man he is so stupid even blind stupidity is ashamed to go near him. I've no idea if this makes any sense.

No, I am not treasure hunting today. No magic suits of armor, or Swords of Merlin. Today, I am playing beggar to look up women's dresses.

“Who are you trying to impress?”

“A lady. Your job is to kidnap her for me. I will interrupt your attempt and rescue her. She will

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

fall in love with me.”

“I can play a friend or an enemy. Whatever you want as long as you pay well. You know, sometimes this ploy does not work.”

“I know, this is my fifth attempt.”

How far did you take this love-affair with the goat? Methinks I should no longer be seen with you.

She was drunk when she said she loved me. How can I believe her? Intoxicated, I once said I love you - to a horse.

Life can be fulfilling. You are never bored of always finding ways to occupy yourself. Ale is a good start.

My dog also abandoned me and ran off I know not where to. I was so lonely that in my desperation I took refuge in a church and conversed with a boring priest.

She has said yes! She has agreed to marry me! After all this waiting my patience paid off! I am doomed to hell!

Let us bring down the moon, Randalfo! It is an annoying circle! Its face is too ugly! Its singing voice is too loud and out of tune!

To set words down on paper is to have them stolen by others. I hate when others take credit for my innermost thoughts. So I stopped writing them down. And the thieves went away.

It is a real book. It is a book I never wrote. I have it written here in my mind and carry it always. I cannot show you a copy. It would hurt my head.

Quietly aim the boat toward yonder village across the lake with intent to slaughter, but do it quietly.

It is a strange world. Night and day. Phases of the moon. Sunsets. Is that a dead bird I see? Look more dead birds!

Woman, the child is not mine! We went to bed, yes! But you were drunk and do not remember I could

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

not get it up!

One day there will be a way to see if a child belongs to this or that man. Until then the richest man is the father.

She is the sweetest thing I ever saw. Lovely and kind. Pure and chaste. The kind a man marries. When is the rape?

No, you fool. You cannot fight for both sides. You will be killed by both sides.

Bring a sword, there is a good chance there will be trouble. Bring a priest too, you could get killed.

I had a dream that I unearthed a chest of gold and jewels. When I awoke I found myself digging through the trash.

Death comes for me. He left a message for me last night. I found a long knife under my bed.

I hate elves, and dwarfs, and whenever I am in the fields, at dusk, in the magic light of the moon, I stomp on fairies.

“What did you just call me? A killer of malt? What the devil is a killer of malt?”

“And what kind of weapon is a Mot's Knife?”

“I told you they would not understand the Lot's Wife and Pillar of Salt reference, neither of those two assassins ever paid much attention in Sunday School.”

I never much liked too much salt anyway. A little extra pepper was always sufficient.

“My King, I have learned the most ghastly and mysterious news. Enemy ships will attack the city tonight.”

“I am betrayed! Close the gates! Heat the oil. Ready for battle! And please do not tell me my soldiers have been out drinking!”

“Even if you kill me I will still win in the end. How it is to be accomplished - the same fate that felled Isidora shall seal your doom.”

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

“I will fall out of a window wearing a woman's dress?”

He creeps along like some insect that cannot find its way back home, crazed and mumbling nonsense. Like my husband.

“They have killed the music composer, Don Galieri! He lies at this very moment, bloody and dead in the street! They are serving free drinks in all the taverns!”

“Let us drink a toast to Don Galieri. May his stay in purgatory be long!”

“May his compositions torture many in hell.”

“To Galieri! May his children go deaf, his wife marry a man who is not a musician, and may the sheet music of his awful songs be used as to wipe a cow's arse.”

The milk is sour so quickly? The devil himself has been here!

Knock down the wall. After we are inside kill everyone and everything, but keep the poultry alive.

What do I care about what to me happens in the afterlife? In this life I'm already too busy dying a little every day.

No, it was not a ghost, it was a shadow. Ghosts are white. Shadows are black. That means it was a live person that was hiding but fled, or Death himself come to remind me my days are numbered!

“Who told you to be here, on this day, at this hour, on this very spot, looking like a complete and utter fool?”

“You did, last night, when you were drunk. It didn't make sense then either.”

Evil thieving monster! Venomous robbing snake! Vile grave-robber! These you can do but a simple pickled egg, this you cannot find!

Bah! On my last day it would be joy enough to simply kill all three of you. The king would still give me half his kingdom.

You think too small, with one day left to live, I would sneak into the King's castle and rape his sexy Queen.

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

At night a very bright light. At first I thought it was an angel. Then I realized it was a firefly on my eyelid.

Attacked by chickens. Ants covering my body. Flies coming out of my mouth. Anything but to have to listen to my wife speak.

My horse ran head-first into a wall. Of course I jumped off before the dumb animal bounded towards it. He must be in love to be that stupid.

“Darling, I am hungry, go kill me a deer.”

“It might take hours before a deer presents itself.”

“How hard can it be? You lazy man! Go to where they live and present *yourself*.”

That man was dragging a dead body, not into but out of a graveyard. I will not drink with him at the same table!

Love? I do not know what that army looks like. I have heard its sound, heard it has killed many, but never have actually seen it in battle.

Inside the heart is an evil not worth unlocking. No magic spell can save one from the unholy curse called love!

When will you be done drawing? This rotten painting is taking too long and my arse is getting colder and more painful than the devil's own heart!

“Madam, if you persist in touching me under the table I will tell your husband even at the risk of my own life! At this moment I am too embarrassed to value it!

“Madam, I do not know why you will not leave me alone! Why do I fascinate you? I am not interesting, even to my dog!

“Madam, you make fun of me! I am not your entertainment! For clownish entertainment go see a puppet show!

“Madam, the biggest in the city? This rumor is intentionally malicious! And is true only of my horse!”

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Now turn him over, let's see his face. Hmm. Interesting. Unfortunate. Bloody hell. We have killed the wrong man.

I have set a fire! By accident, I swear! I did not mean it! At first I did, but by the time I had changed my mind it was too late. I did repent. Does a man who accidentally sets a fire still go to hell?

I am staying right here, glued to this bed. Going outside is too dangerous. Or you can just call me a lazy prisoner.

Send a pigeon with this message, Dear sirs, I am sorry to inform you that all my pigeons are infected with contagious diseases.

“Really? The man in question gives great advice? You trust him? Listen here. I once heard he tried to rape a cow.”

“That rumor is a lie. It's simply not true. It was a pig.”

I will meet you in the alley. There we will make the exchange. Beware of robbers. We are all of us crafty bastards.

Put on this dress! I do not care if you are a man! If my husband finds you he will cut off what makes you a man! And you will be useless to me!

I saw the evil look in his voice. I see sounds in ways hidden to others. Thank heavens I can witness men's negative intentions. Since I am blind.

I heard a terrible, horrible thing. The hearing of it will make the hair on your head stand up, ruin your new hairdo.

I looked in the well. I heard nothing. We threw him in head first. I am sure he is dead. I would not drink from it.

A boat! A boat! My kingdom for a boat! With no holes in it!

Look! Glorious birds in the sky! The gods are being generous to us! Quickly, give me bow and arrow! We're eating seagull tonight!

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

Not again! Playing a whore! Why does my wife always take roles of whores in stage-plays? To drive me mad, no doubt!

Take this advice, hang yourself. To ease your sorrows? No. To ease our's. For you are a horrible burden to all men.

A dream persists, bothering me, pestering me, driving me insane. But I keep forgetting the rotten thing when I wake up!

No one knows you better than I do, not even your rotten wife! And she washes your dirty underwear!

I must get out of this city, there is simply too much intrigue here. But then there is much boredom where I plan to go.

“What would you say if I told you I just saw an little green elf the size of a pint of ale?”

“I would say buy the little fellow a pint and ask him to join us.”

## **The End of the Sayings**

**A Word-Forager Speaks:**

I knew the Cousin only by voice. I never saw his face. He always stayed in the shadows, always in the shadows. He took our notes, paid us well, then left by the back door, always by a back door. There was always a hint of humor to his speech, as if he might burst out laughing at any moment. But his orders were always serious and specific. Go here, do this, go there, do that. If I could influence a situation by making two men argue, he usually encouraged this method. I often told men their wives were cheating. I often told men their wives were cheating on them with their best friends. It was a horrible business. Sometimes it was fun. But often it was violent. This is how the phrase “bloody hell” came into being: I had told a bishop that a certain man had bedded his favorite sheep. The bishop weeping killed his sheep to keep that man from temptation, but, actually confronted the sodomite who bloodied that bishop's face, who in turn wished him condemned to hell. I felt I was a part of history in the making. I felt I was a part of something big. Then the Sodomite learned what I had done. This is how I lost my sight and became blind. Now that you've heard my sad tale, can you spare a sixpence?

## The Cousin of Shakespeare

### **Playhouse Press Release:**

"The Denizens of Fallentown" will be the name of a new play in two acts, and will consist of original material not seen before. There will be jugglers, dragons, jealous wives, insane husbands, ghosts, headless persons. Okay, you got me, there will be no jugglers or dragons or headless people (which is something quite difficult to pull off since Special Make-Up Effects have not been invented yet). But as a point of general interest poison will be poured into the ears of several theater-goers who have been targeted by a certain local dark, criminal element for rather morbid public assassination. There will be no sets (we can't afford them). Men will portray women (will this unrealistic crap ever end?). But there are several strong, intelligent, and forceful female characters for the ladies (this material was not written in Hollywood). Midgets dressed in period costumes will be ushering. Please pat them softly on the head if they are helpful. Do not kick our small employees. It might be funny, yes, but it is also quite counter-productive, as some of them are actually our Play Producers. In case of rain (since we will be performing outdoors) a full sized ark, not as big as Noah's, will be available nearby. Bring all of your animals just in case the rain does not stop, creatures both male and female. No insects please.

For those who pay the least to get in to see the play, bring your own cushion to sit on, as we are respecters of men with means. In case of fire, everyone should head immediately for the nearest river to throw yourselves into it thereby extinguishing any flames that may have attached themselves to your clothing. No smoking please, the audience must stay in character, tobacco will not be discovered until we Europeans encounter the American Indians. If it snows heavily, skis will be provided, but you must sign agreements that we will not be liable if you accidentally slide off any steep inclines and die rather unusual deaths. Several high-profile celebrities are interested in performing in this production, so we have to keep moving our base of operations around to avoid the many incessant inquiries and groupie solicitations. We will not name names, for we are not name-droppers. And please be aware that several interested celebs are movie-stars and not actual actors. They will appear simply for their name value and drawing power and not because they are great stage talent. Please try to keep any celebrity applause to a minimum as you might look like a complete idiot. All other minor parts will be played by unknown actors, new faces, new voices. In order to launch this production quickly and cheaply we have already cast one actor, a Monk who will play three meat-eating roles. No ambitious young actresses should attempt to approach anyone involved in this production with unsavory offers of gratuitous sex. Most of us are married and our lovely wives will be attending every single damn stupid frigging performance. Anyone interested in obtaining more information about this production should contact the author, but you'll have to find him first, as he is hard to nail down, and moves around a lot. You might find him under a table and unconscious in some dark pub in Quarry Lane. Good luck with such a search. Midget producers willing to invest in our production are always welcome. How you little fellows always manage to raise lots of cash in so short a time is a mystery I think I'll never quite understand.

The Cousin of Shakespeare